

Remarks

This is in response to the Office Action of July 31, 2003. Non-elected claims 6-15 have been canceled without prejudice as to their future prosecution. Claim 1 has been amended, support for the amendment being found, for example, at page 5, lines 22-30 of the present application. Claims 1-5 remain pending in the application. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, the title was objected to as being non-descriptive. The title has been amended to more clearly indicate the subject matter to which the claims are directed. Removal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gage et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,796,688. This rejection is respectfully traversed, and its correctness is not conceded.

Claim 1 is directed to recording/reproducing apparatus for an optical information recording medium having a plurality of recording layers. Claim 1 recites that the recording/reproducing apparatus comprises a plurality of optical heads provided on a same side with respect to the recording medium. Claim 1 further recites that the plurality of optical heads are assigned to reproduce information from or record information in different recording layers respectively and simultaneously so as to enable high-speed information transfer.

It is advantageous to configure the recording/reproducing apparatus as recited by claim 1 so that information can be reproduced from or recorded in recording layers simultaneously, thus enabling high-speed information transfer. This can result, for example, in information being recorded or reproduced at a speed twice as fast as that in a conventional method. Application, page 5, lines 22-30.

Gage discloses, as shown in Figure 3, a recording/reproducing apparatus including two optical heads 21a and 21b. The first optical head 21a is configured to read tracking information, and the second optical head 21b is configured to record information on a layer different from a layer containing the tracking information being read by the first optical head 21a. See, e.g., Gage, column 4, lines 19-21, and column 5, lines 1-3 and 28-34. Therefore, in Gage only one of the optical heads (i.e., optical head 21a) is assigned to read tracking information, and the data rate at which the tracking information can be read is constrained to the speed at which the single optical head can read the tracking information.

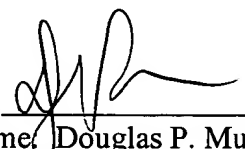
In contrast to the apparatus disclosed by Gage, claim 1 recites that the plurality of optical heads are assigned to reproduce information from or record information in different recording layers respectively and simultaneously so as to enable high-speed information transfer. Gage does not disclose or suggest a plurality of optical heads assigned to reproduce or record information in different recording layers simultaneously, as recited by claim 1.

For at least these reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claim 1, as well as claims 2-5 that depend therefrom, are respectfully requested.

Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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